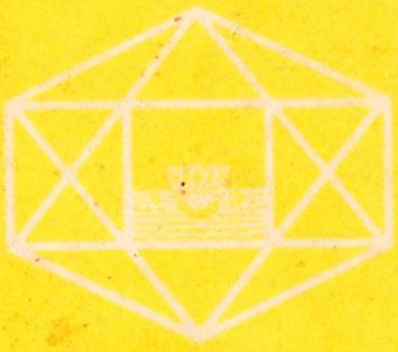
NOVEMBER 1978

ALL INDIA MAGAZINE



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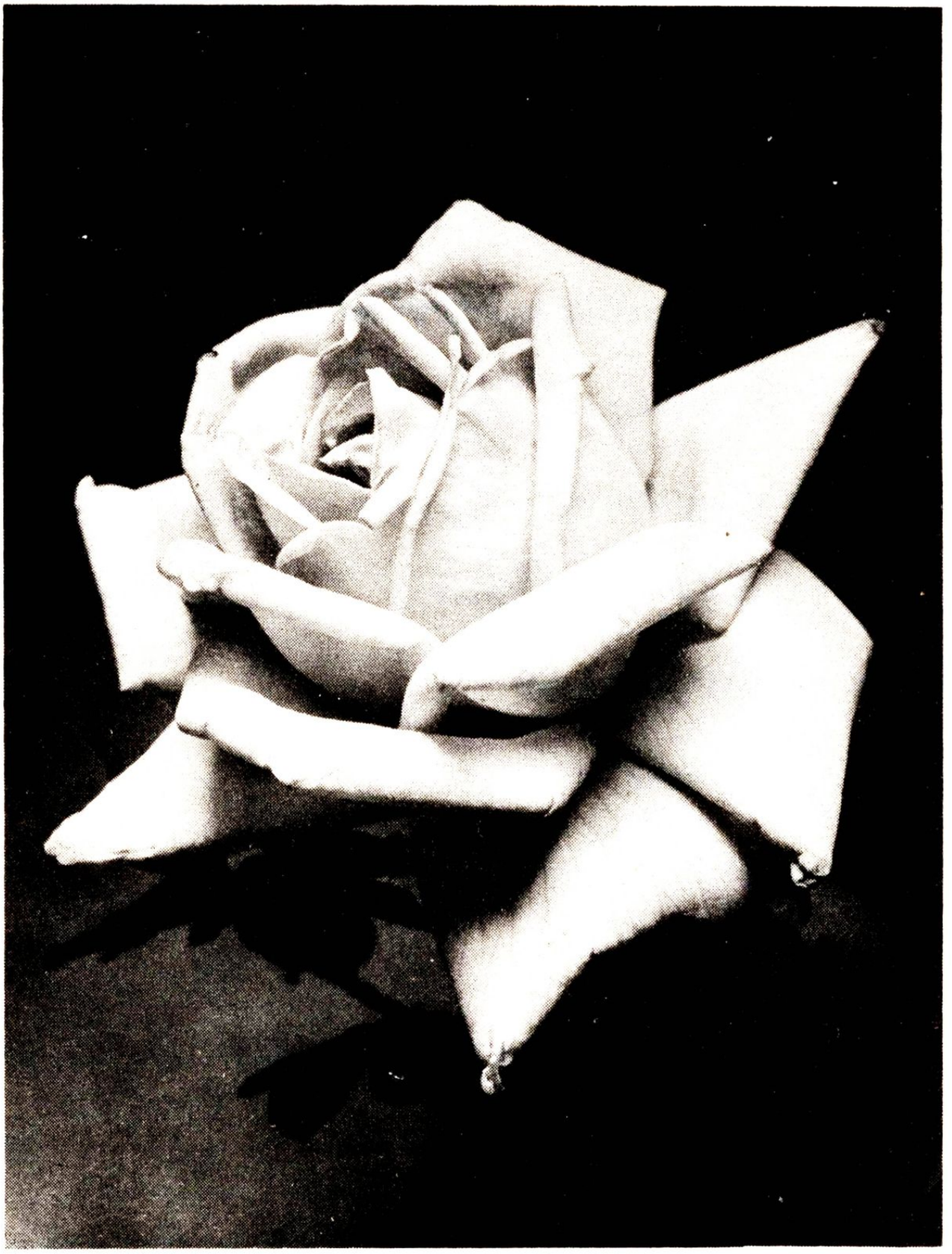
All the articles in this issue, except the first and the last pieces and the Information Letter, are excerpts from the writings and talks of SRI AUROBINDO and THE MOTHER. Most of the Mother's words are translations from the original French. Titles to these excerpts are given by the editor.



PERFECT SURRENDER

The indispensable condition for identification

The name (message of the flower) and the short note above are given by the Mother for the large pink roses.

Surrender — Absolute and Unreserved

(On March 29, 1914, the very first day the Mother arrived in Pondicherry from France, she met Sri Aurobindo, in the afternoon at 3.30, in his residence at 41, Rue François Martin. The following passage is Shri Nolini Kanta Gupta's reminiscences of Sri Aurobindo's reference to it in a conversation.)

The first time Sri Aurobindo happened to describe her [the Mother's] qualities, he said he had never seen anywhere a self-surrrender so absolute and unreserved. He had added a comment that perhaps it was only women who were capable of giving themselves so entirely and with such sovereign ease. This implies a complete obliteration of the past, erasing it with its virtues and faults. The Mother has referred to this in one of her Prayers and Meditations. When she came here, she gave herself up to the Lord, Sri Aurobindo, with the candid simplicity of a child, after erasing from herself all her past, all her spiritual attainments, all the riches of her consciousness. Like a new-born babe, she felt she possessed nothing, she was to learn everything right from the start, as if she had known or heard about nothing....

It is not an easy thing for a human being to wash himself clean of all his past acquisitions, be it intellectual knowledge or the habits of the vital, not to speak of the body's needs, and step forth in his nude purity. And yet this is the first and most important step in the spiritual discipline. The Mother has given us a living example of this.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(*Reminiscences*, ed. 1969, pp. 81-82)

Some Diary-Entries

(Prayers and Meditations of the Mother after her first meeting with Sri Aurobindo)

March 30, 1914

...It matters little that there are thousands of beings plunged in the densest ignorance, He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.

O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel, my heart overflows with joy and gratitude when I think of it, and my hope has no bounds.

My adoration is beyond all words, my reverence is silent.

April 1, 1914

I feel we have entered the very heart of Thy sanctuary and grown aware of Thy very will. A great joy, a deep peace reign in me, and yet all my inner constructions have vanished like a vain dream and I find myself now, before Thy immensity, without a frame or system, like a being not yet individualised. All the past in its external form seems ridiculously arbitrary to me, and yet I know it was useful in its own time.

But now all is changed: a new stage has begun.

April 2, 1914

Everyday, when I want to write, I am interrupted, as though the new period opening now before us were a period of expansion rather than of concentration. It is in the activity of each moment that we must serve Thee and identify ourselves with Thee rather than in deep and silent contemplation or in meditation, written or unwritten.

But my heart does not tire of singing a hymn to Thee and my thought is constantly filled with Thee.

April 3, 1914

It seems to me that I am being born to a new life and all the methods, the habits of the past can no longer be of any use. It seems to me that what I thought were results is nothing more than a preparation. I feel as though I have done nothing yet, as though I have not lived the spiritual life, only entered the path that leads to it, it seems to me that I know nothing, that I am incapable of formulating anything, that all experience is yet to begin. It is as though I were stripped of my entire past, of its errors as well as its conquests, as though all that has vanished and made room for a new-born child whose whole existence is yet to be lived, who has no Karma, no experience to learn from, but no error either which has to be set right. My head is empty of all knowledge and all certitude, but also of all vain thought. I feel that if I learn how to surrender without any resistance to this state, if I do not try to know or understand, if I consent to be completely like an ignorant and candid child, some new possibility will

open before me. I know that I must now definitively give myself up and be like an absolutely blank page on which Thy thought, Thy will, O Lord, can be inscribed freely without danger of any deformation.

An immense gratitude rises from my heart, it seems to me that I have at last reached the threshold I sought so much.

Grant, O Lord, that I may be sufficiently pure, impersonal, animated with Thy divine love to be able to cross it definitively.

O, to belong to Thee without any darkness, without any restriction !

April 4, 1914

O Lord, my adoration rises ardently to Thee, all my being is an aspiration, a flame consecrated to Thee.

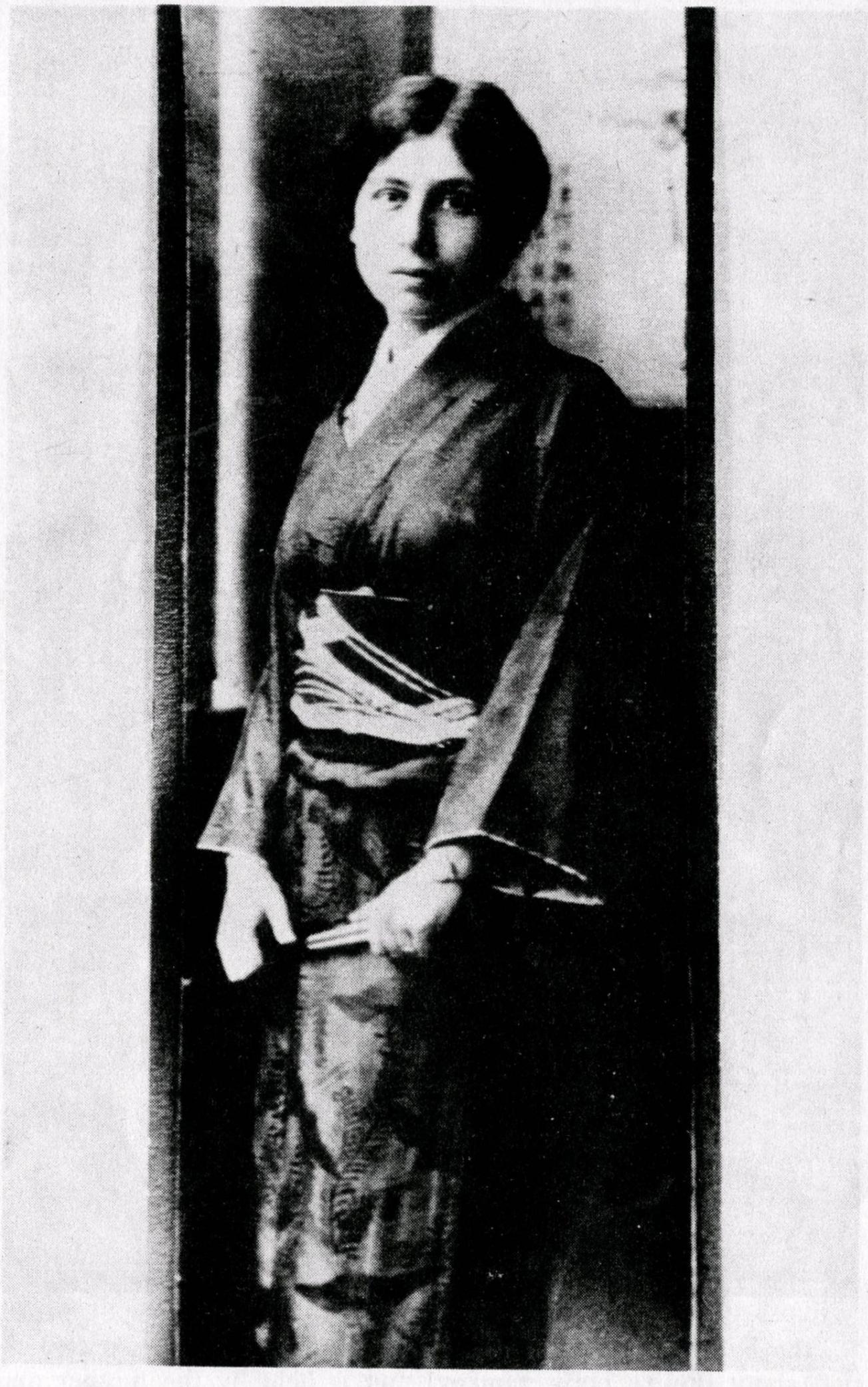
Lord, Lord, my sweet Master, it is Thou who livest and willest in me !

This body is Thy instrument; this will is Thy servant; this intelligence is Thy tool; and the whole being is only Thyself.

April 7, 1914

... O Lord... I seem to hear Thy voice: "Never hast thou known how to die integrally. Always something in thee has wanted to know, to witness, to understand. Surrender completely, learn how to disappear, break the last barrier that separates thee from me; accomplish unreservedly thy act of surrender."

THE MOTHER



The Mother in Japan 1918

"... the baby cat does not hold to its mother in order to be carried about [unlike baby monkey], but is held by the mother and has no fear nor responsibility; it has nothing to do but to let the mother hold it and cry *ma ma*."

The Path of Surrender

There are two paths of Yoga, one of *tapasyā* (discipline), and the other of surrender. The path of *tapasyā* is arduous. Here you rely solely upon yourself, you proceed by your own strength. You ascend and achieve according to the measure of your force. There is always the danger of falling down. And once you fall, you lie broken in the abyss and there is hardly a remedy. The other path, the path of surrender, is safe and sure. It is here, however, that the Western people find their difficulty. They have been taught to fear and avoid all that threatens their personal independence. They have imbibed with their mother's milk the sense of individuality. And surrender means giving up all that. In other words, you may follow, as Ramakrishna says, either the path of the baby monkey or that of the baby cat. The baby monkey holds to its mother in order to be carried about and it must hold firm, otherwise if it loses its grip, it falls. On the other hand, the baby cat does not hold to its mother, but is held by the mother and has no fear nor responsibility; it has nothing to do but to let the mother hold it and cry *ma ma*.

If you take up this path of surrender fully and sincerely, there is no more danger or serious difficulty. The question is to be sincere. If you are not sincere, do not begin Yoga. If you were dealing in human affairs, then you could resort to deception; but in dealing with the Divine there is no possibility of deception anywhere.

You can go on the Path safely when you are candid and open to the core and when your only end is to realise and attain the Divine and to be moved by the Divine.

*
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Surrender... may be defined as the giving up of the limits of your ego. To surrender to the Divine is to renounce your narrow limits and let yourself be invaded by it and made a centre for its play....

The real bar to self-surrender... is the individual's love of his own limitations. It is a natural love, since in the very formation of the individual being there is a tendency to concentrate on limits.... [But] in the Divine you do not really lose your individuality: you only give up your egoism and become the true individual, the divine personality which is not temporary like the construction of the physical consciousness which is usually taken for your *self*. One touch of the divine consciousness and you see immediately that there is no loss in it. On the contrary, you acquire a true individual permanence which can survive a hundred deaths of the body and all the vicissitudes of the vital-mental evolution.

THE MOTHER

(*Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 3, pp. 4-5, 168-69)

Surrender and Personal Effort

You remember, we spoke once of the attitude of the baby cat and that of the baby monkey.... Note that it is very easy to say, "Choose the attitude of the baby cat", but it is not so easy to do. You must not believe that adopting the attitude of the baby cat lets you off from all personal effort. Because you are not a baby cat, human beings are not baby cats! There are in you innumerable elements which are accustomed to trusting only themselves, which want to do their own work, and it is much more difficult to control all these elements than to let oneself go in all circumstances. It is very difficult. First of all, there is always that wonderful work of the mind which likes so very much to observe, criticise, analyse, doubt, try to solve the problem, say, "Is it good thus?", " Would it not be better like that?", and so on. So that goes on and on, and where is the baby cat?... For the baby cat does not think! It is free from all this and hence it is much easier for it!

Whatever be the way you follow, personal effort is always necessary till the moment of identification. At that moment all effort drops from you like a worn-out robe, you are another person: what was impossible for you becomes not only possible but indispensable, you cannot do otherwise.

You must be attentive, silent, must await the inner inspiration, not do anything from external reactions, you must be moved by the light that comes from above, con-

stantly, regularly, must act only under the inspiration of that light and nothing else. Never to think, never to question, never to ask "Should I do this or that ?", but to know, to see, to hear. To act with an inner certitude without questioning and without doubting, because the decision does not come from you, it comes from above.

*
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What is required of you is not a passive surrender, in which you become like a block, but to put your will at the disposal of the Divine Will.

Q: But how can one do this before the union has been effected ?

You have a will and you can offer that will. Take the example of becoming conscious of your nights. If you take the attitude of passive surrender, you would say, "When it is the Divine Will that I should become conscious, then I shall become conscious." On the other hand, if you offer your will to the Divine, you begin to will, you say, "I will become conscious of my nights." You have the will that it should be done; you do not sit down idle and wait. The surrender comes in when you take the attitude that says, "I give my will to the Divine. I intensely want to become conscious of my nights, I have not the knowledge, let the Divine Will work it out for me." Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved. This is the first step. If you are vigilant, if your attention is

alert, you will certainly receive something in the form of an inspiration of what is to be done and that you must forthwith proceed to do. Only, you must remember that to surrender is to accept whatever is the result of your action, though the result may be quite different from what you expect. On the other hand, if your surrender is passive, you will do nothing and try nothing; you will simply go to sleep and wait for a miracle.

Now to know whether your will or desire is in agreement with the Divine Will or not, you must look and see whether you have an answer or have no answer, whether you feel supported or contradicted, not by the mind or the vital or the body, but by that something which is always there deep in the inner being, in your heart.

THE MOTHER

(*Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 4, p. 94; Vol. 3, pp. 18-19)

An inert passivity is constantly confused with the real surrender, but out of an inert passivity nothing true and powerful can come. It is the inert passivity of physical Nature that leaves it at the mercy of every obscure or undivine influence. A glad and strong and helpful submission is demanded to the working of the Divine Force, the obedience of the illumined disciple of the Truth, of the inner Warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood, of the faithful servant of the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo

Is Ours a Real Surrender

It is their mental and vital formation of me that they love, it is not myself. More and more am I faced with this fact. Everyone has made for himself an image of me in conformity with his needs and desires, and it is with this image that he is in contact, it is through this that he receives what few universal forces and still less supramental forces succeed in filtering through all these formations. Unfortunately these people cling to my physical presence, otherwise I could withdraw into my inner solitude and, from there, do my work quietly and freely; but this physical presence is for them a symbol and that is why they cling to it, for, in fact, they have very little real contact with what my body truly is, and with the formidable accumulation of conscious energy it represents.

*

Since I love only You, O Lord, it is You alone whom I love in all and in each one; and by dint of loving You in them, I shall end up by making them a little conscious of You.

For them, the real thing is to know how to let themselves be loved without any preference and obstruction. But, not only do they not want to be loved except in their own way, they do not want also to open themselves to love unless it comes to them through the intermediary of their choice... and what could be done in a few hours, a few months or a few years takes centuries to be accomplished.

THE MOTHER

(*Champaklal's Treasures*, pp. 91-92)

What to Surrender

Q: Does not surrender consist in offering one's work like a good servant?

Work is a good discipline. But it is not this idea, it is not the idea of a passive, unconscious and almost involuntary submission. It is not that. It does not lie only in work.

The most important surrender is the surrender of your character, your way of being, so that it may change. If you do not surrender your very own nature, never will this nature change. It is this that is most important. You have certain ways of understanding, certain ways of reacting, certain ways of feeling, almost certain ways of progressing, and above all, a special way of looking at life and expecting from it certain things — well, it is this you must surrender. That is, if you truly want to receive the divine Light and transform yourself, it is your whole way of being you must offer — offer by opening it, making it as receptive as possible so that the divine Consciousness which sees how you ought to be, may act directly and change all these movements into movements more true, more in keeping with your real truth. This is infinitely more important than surrendering what one does. It is not what one does (what one does is very important, that's evident) that is the most important thing but what one *is*. Whatever the activity, it is not quite the way of doing it but the state of con-

sciousness in which it is done that is important. You may work, do disinterested work without any idea of personal profit, work for the joy of working, but if you are not at the same time ready to leave this work, to change the work or change the way of working, if you cling to your own way of working, your surrender is not complete. You must come to a point when everything is done because you feel within, very clearly, in a more and more imperious way, that it is this which must be done and in this particular way, and that you do it only because of that. You do not do it because of any habit, attachment or preference, nor even any conception, even a preference for the idea that it is the best thing to do — else your surrender is not total. As long as you cling to something, as long as there is something in you which says, "This may change, that may change, but *that*, that will not change", as long as you say about anything at all, "That will not change" (not that it refuses to change, but because you can't think of its changing), your surrender is not complete.

It goes without saying that if in your action, your work, you have in the least this feeling, "I am doing it because I have been told to do it", and there is not a total adherence of the being, and you do not do the work because you feel it must be done and you love doing it; if something holds back, stands apart, separate, "I was told it had to be done like that so I did it like that", it means there is a great gulf between you and surrender. True surrender is to feel that one wants, one has, this complete inner adherence: you cannot do

but that, that which you have been given to do, and what you have not been given to do you cannot do. But at another moment the work may change; at any moment it may be something else, if it is decided that it be something else. It is there that plasticity comes in. That makes a very great difference. It is well understood that those who work are told, "Yes, work, that is your way of surrendering", but it is a beginning. This way has to be progressive. It is only a beginning, do you understand ?

*
**

Q: How to persuade the recalcitrant parts of our nature to surrender ?

Try to make them understand, as one does with a child who does not understand, by all kinds of means: pictures, explanations, symbols. Make them understand the necessity of union and harmony with the other parts of the being; reason with them, try to make them conscious of their acts and the consequences of these. Above all, be very patient, do not tire of repeating the same things.

THE MOTHER

(*Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol. 4, pp. 372-74, 182-83)

Nature rediscovers the Divine in a blissful surrender.

The Mother

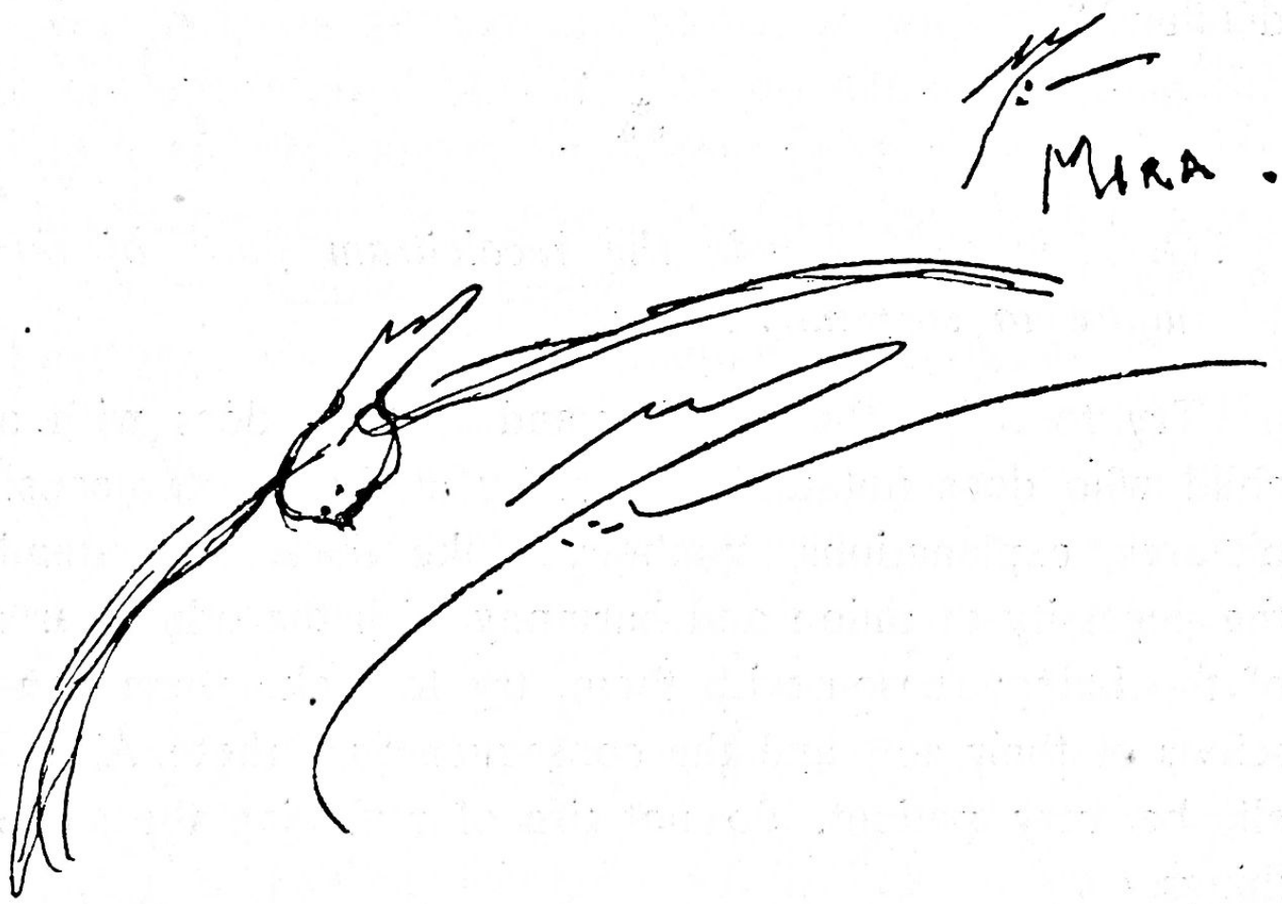
The Mother's Signature

Do you know what this means? (*Mother points to Her signature*)

No, Mother.

No? Wait. I'll show you. (*Mother draws a bird above the signature*) Do you see?

Yes, Mother.



This is a graphic representation of the signature. It means: *the Bird of Peace descending upon earth. Its wings are tilted towards the earth.* You see the angle of the wings and how it is descending to the earth? It is to bring Peace. It is the messenger of Peace.

* The words in between the two asterisks — whenever they appear — were spoken in English by the Mother. The conversation was held in French.

The Bird of Peace descending upon the earth. Do you see?

Yes, Mother, but...

Now I am going to explain to you how this bird corresponds to the signature. Look, first this, this is the tail of the bird. Here are the two points of the tail I am drawing. You have seen the tail of a bird, it is like this.

Yes, Mother.

Well, the two points of the tail and one wing together make one part of the bird. And this, here, is the other wing. These are large wings. And here the eyes are represented by these two dots. And here is the head.

The bird is seen coming from a distance, that is why one can make out only the eyes which are shining and not the details of the head. The eyes are important, for they reflect the soul. It has very large wings, tilted like this to one side. That is why its body is hidden. The body can't be seen; it is hidden behind its large wings. From far only its two eyes can be seen and not the other parts. Because only the eyes are shining, the eyes which reflect the soul. They are important — the eyes.

So, that's how it is: the tail with one wing, and this is the other wing, and these two dots — the eyes. (*Mother shows these on the drawing*) Now, you see?

Yes, Mother, it's true.

Did you know this?

No, Mother, it is very interesting.

It is the symbolic representation of the Bird of Peace descending upon earth. Instead of drawing the whole

bird each time, I draw a symbolical design, which represents this bird. You can see quite well, the bird in flight descending towards the earth. It is still far away, but one day it will alight upon the earth. Then, there will be Peace on earth. That, then, is the significance of my signature.

It comes from another world to bring Peace down here. Do you understand ? (*Silence*)

But, Mother, Your signature has no connection with... "Mira"... Your name ?

No, absolutely none. No connection at all with that. People put silly interpretations on things. That's because they imagine all kinds of things and attach a meaning to them in conformity with their fancy. This has no relation with my name.

But, Mother, I have seen on Your photos, some old photos, that You have signed "Mira" with this signature.

...It has no connection with "Mira". (*Mother writes*) It is like this and has no relation with my signature. These are only groundless fancies. (*Mother draws*) My signature is this. It is *the Bird of Peace descending upon earth.* And none of those stories. Do you understand ?

Yes, Mother.[1]

[1] *From a conversation of the Mother with Mona Sarkar, recorded by him from memory and published in* Sweet Mother, Harmonies of Light, *pp. 5-7, 1978 ed.*

Life has a Purpose

An involution of the Divine Existence, the spiritual Reality, in the apparent inconscience of Matter is the starting-point of the evolution. But that Reality is in its nature an eternal Existence, Consciousness, Delight of Existence: the evolution must then be an emergence of this Existence, Consciousness, Delight of Existence, not at first in its essence or totality but in evolutionary forms that express or disguise it. Out of the Inconscient, Existence appears in a first evolutionary form as substance of Matter created by an inconscient Energy. Consciousness, involved and non-apparent in Matter, first emerges in the disguise of vital vibrations, animate but subconscient; then, in imperfect formulations of a conscient life, it strives towards self-finding through successive forms of that material substance, forms more and more adapted to its own completer expression. Consciousness in life, throwing off the primal insensibility of a material inanimation and nescience, labours to find itself more and more entirely in the Ignorance which is its first inevitable formulation; but it achieves at first only a primary mental perception and a vital awareness of self and things, a life-perception which in its first forms depends on an internal sensation responsive to the contacts of other life and of Matter. Consciousness labours to manifest as best it can through the inadequacy of sensation its own inherent delight of being; but it can only formulate a partial pain and pleasure. In man the energising Consciousness appears as Mind more clearly aware of itself

and things; this is still a partial and limited, not an integral power of itself, but a first conceptive potentiality and promise of integral emergence is visible. That integral emergence is the goal of evolving Nature.

Man is there to affirm himself in the universe, that is his first business, but also to evolve and finally to exceed himself: he has to enlarge his partial being into a complete being, his partial consciousness into an integral consciousness; he has to achieve mastery of his environment but also world-union and world-harmony; he has to realise his individuality but also to enlarge it into a cosmic self and a universal and spiritual delight of existence. A transformation, a chastening and correction of all that is obscure, erroneous and ignorant in his mentality, an ultimate arrival at a free and wide harmony and luminousness of knowledge and will and feeling and action and character, is the evident intention of his nature; it is the ideal which the creative Energy has imposed on his intelligence, a need implanted by her in his mental and vital substance. But this can only be accomplished by his growing into a larger being and a larger consciousness: self-enlargement, self-fulfilment, self-evolution from what he partially and temporarily is in his actual and apparent nature to what he completely is in his secret self and spirit and therefore can become even in his manifest existence, is the object of his creation.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Life Divine*, Cent. ed. vol. 19, pp. 683-84)

Food-Offering to the Lord

(The Legend of Gunderao)

There was once a Brahmin farmer. His name was Gunderao. He was completey illiterate. He never even moved out of his small village. He had accepted his lot and led a quiet life of contentment. There was only one member left of his family — his old mother. His wants were few and were within the easy reach of his capacity. Once a Sannyasi visited the village and took up residence with this Brahmin farmer. The whole village breathed an air of devotion and was brimming with religious activities. After a couple of days, when the Sannyasi was about to leave the village, the farmer and his old mother went to him and bowed their farewell pranām. The Sannyasi in his parting message said to the farmer, "Don't forget to perform Aradhana every day and never take your food without Naivedya." The farmer could not grasp the meaning of the message as he knew nothing about religious rites. The Sannyasi smiled at his ignorance and explained that Aradhana meant worship of the Divine with love, self-giving and calling the name; and Naivedya meant food and everything else that is offered to a deity, the Divine.

Next day, when the Sannyasi had left, the farmer resumed his daily work and went to his field. At noon he walked to the nearby river, finished his bath and placed his food before the Lord in a neighbouring temple. Five minutes passed, then ten minutes and even half

an hour. "Oh ! today God must be very busy," reflected the farmer, "because He is the Lord of all the worlds and He has to manage things everywhere. All right ! I shall wait for Him some more time." And he waited. Another hour passed and seeing that He did not turn up he said, "If you do not come and take the food, how am I to take my meal ? I am getting hungry and there is work to do.... Or is it that you are displeased with me because I neglected you all these days ? But I am told you are all compassion and you forgive all our sins. So please forgive my negligence and come soon. Here on the spot I give my word. I shall never again neglect you. I will never take my food without Naivedya."

A small voice spoke to him, "But can you wait for me ? I see you are already quite restless. I do not take your word seriously." The voice sank into the soul of the Brahmin farmer and he trembled. He could not speak. Tears came into his eyes, and he sat motionless. Another hour passed and the sun was slowly moving downward in the west. Another hour or two passed and the farmer opened his eyes. Dusk had begun to fall. His heart cried out, "Lord ! I will wait — wait till the end. I will not take my food until you pardon me and accept my offering of food." With this resolution in his mind he sat silent like a stone. A golden hush, like a splendid robe of God, enveloped the fields. With the song of the homing birds and the soft rays of the sun, Mother Nature lulled to rest the day's labour of the fields. The night approached with its myriad star-splendour. A crescent glory in heaven watched the spheres

When the Sannyasi was about to leave the village, the farmer and his old mother went to him and bowed their farewell pranām.

with a smile of benediction. The farmer sat, a marble figure on a "pedestal of prayer". He was awakened by a sudden touch of inexplicable joy in his breast. "Strange," he reflected, "I have not taken food. I was hungry like a dog. Instead of the pangs of hunger I am stirred by a nameless joy! I do not understand. Tell me, what is this your game, O Lord?"

Then spoke a voice which was heard within the depths of his soul, "Now you are vexing me. All right! I am here. Feed me." The farmer opened his eyes and saw that the "idol" was throbbing with life. He began to feed Him. "The food has gone stale. What can I do? You are so late!" So he said, but when he touched the food he felt it was fresh and not that cold. He wondered. As with the joy of a fond mother, he began feeding the Lord. Soon he saw the idol closed its mouth and stirred no more. He understood that the Naivedya was over. So he turned to take his meal. The food was very delicious. He said to himself, "Never in my life have I tasted such delicious food. It is Amrita indeed."

Food over, he went back home and had a happy sleep. Early next morning he told his mother to prepare a special dish for Naivedya. His mother saw him with a look of surprise and said in a low inquisitive tone, "There is no special occasion, my son." The son replied, "I want to give Him a special dish. Prepare it. Though yesterday He kept me waiting for a long time, I still am full of joy and I want to offer Him a special dish today — occasion or no occasion."

The days passed into weeks and weeks into months.

The life of our farmer Brahmin Gunderao flowed like a sweet and simple stream. He thought always of Naivedya. He worked and waited for the Naivedya. Aradhana had now become the one inevitable centre of his life. Once his old mother complained of indisposition. So he himself prepared the food under her directions. On that day, while offering Naivedya, he said, "Today I have prepared the meal. I don't know how it is cooked. If you want to have delicious dishes, please don't make my mother ill. Now you have to be satisfied with the dish I have offered, good or bad." The food-offering having been over, the farmer began to take his meal. When he was taking it he heard a familiar sweet voice, "I relished your today's preparation. It was quite lovely. Yes, your mother will also be well. Don't worry. But don't forget to prepare a dish or two for me now and then with your own hands." Tears rushed into eyes of the farmer and he fell into silent musing. "O Lord ! my God ! How kind and sweet of you ! I have tasted the food, and I know its taste. Ah, your wonderful love !... That's it. It is the miracle that changes all bitterness into a celestial sweetness. Now for example see the change in me, the beast that I was. The marvellous fire-fingers of your grace are moulding my dust always, at each moment, even without my knowledge. O my dearest Lord ! accept my utter greatfulness. I will obey your word with the zeal and devotion of a faithful wife. Make me your slave. I would serve you always."

Full with such sweet musing and prayers the slow months glided into a year.

A new year dawned and with it the visit of the

Sannyasi was renewed. This time the Brahmin farmer Gunderao was the leader of the reception. He had developed a deep reverence for his guru. And it was natural. The next day the Sannyasi performed Mandapam with golden utensils of worship. Gunderao thought, "I shall also get prepared such wonderful Mandapam for my Lord and also the other things of worship. They are so grand. My Lord would be much pleased... Yes ! ..." He stumbled out of his reverie when the Sannyasi said, "Let the Naivedya be brought." Gunderao rushed in and brought all the dishes and placed them before the Lord. The Sannyasi sprinkled the sanctified water with tulsi leaf, muttering some mantra over all the dishes; and then he closed his eyes forming the name of the Lord on his lips and muttering "Svahakara". Gunderao was very much taken up by the grand show and said to himself, "I must learn these mantras. If I learn and repeat these mantras, my Lord will certainly be pleased more. I will request Guru Maharaj to teach me some mantras."

"Everybody there, come in for Mangalarti," came the loud call of the Sannyasi Maharaj. The call knocked down the simple farmer from his sweet dream. He opened his eyes and saw to his surprise that no dish of the Naivedya was touched by the Lord. With great hesitation he said to the Sannyasi, "But I see the Naivedya is not over. The food is not taken by the Lord !..." The Sannyasi, with a blissful smile on his face, replied, "Yes ! my boy, the Naivedya is over. God is not like men. And he won't eat food physically."

Gunderao: "But He eats !"

Sannyasi: "Stupid fool that you are, you know nothing about our great Shastras. How can I explain to you ?... This is Kaliyuga."

Gunderao: "Excuse me. I have been feeding Him.... Yes, since you told me last year."

Sannyasi (raging with righteous indignation): "It is a lie, a blasphemy. That is written on your face. The Lord to eat the food from your dirty hands !"

Gunderao (with great pain visible on his face and in a broken voice): "Guru Maharaj ! Don't you believe me ? I am now unable to believe my own ears. It is a fact, Guru Maharaj, a bare fact — true and simple. I have taken my food all these days only after the Lord's Naivedya."

Sannyasi (with bitter mockery): "You have, have you ? Be pleased to perform your miracle before all of us. Would you ?"

Gunderao (with extreme pain and in utter humility): "It is not a miracle, Guru Maharaj. It was my daily act. And I have to do it now before you all because I cannot take my food keeping my Lord hungry."

With these words the simple unsophisticated Gunderao sat down with folded hands and closed his eyes streaming with tears, before the Shrine. A silent prayer like a steady flame was rising high. All was silent. "Would you not come today of all days ? Would you prove me a liar and a hypocrite before my Guru, friends and relations ? If you do not come, well, I will kill myself. Better to die than to live a life of utter disgrace. If you love me, come, and take my offering and prove that I was not telling them a lie...." Thus he

went on, the poor soul, with his pleadings and persuasions and prayers.

Sometime later he heard the voice so familiar and yet so strange, "O stupid fool! You have betrayed me today. You are calling me not because you love me but because your honour is at stake. Nobody wants me. All these people want just to see a *tamāshā*. Well, today is the end of our year-long relationship. I will take the food today to save your splendid honour. From now onwards live with your honour."

Gunderao was shuddering at each word in a state of utter despondency. He could not speak a single word. The agony of his soul was unbearable and he fell senseless on the ground.

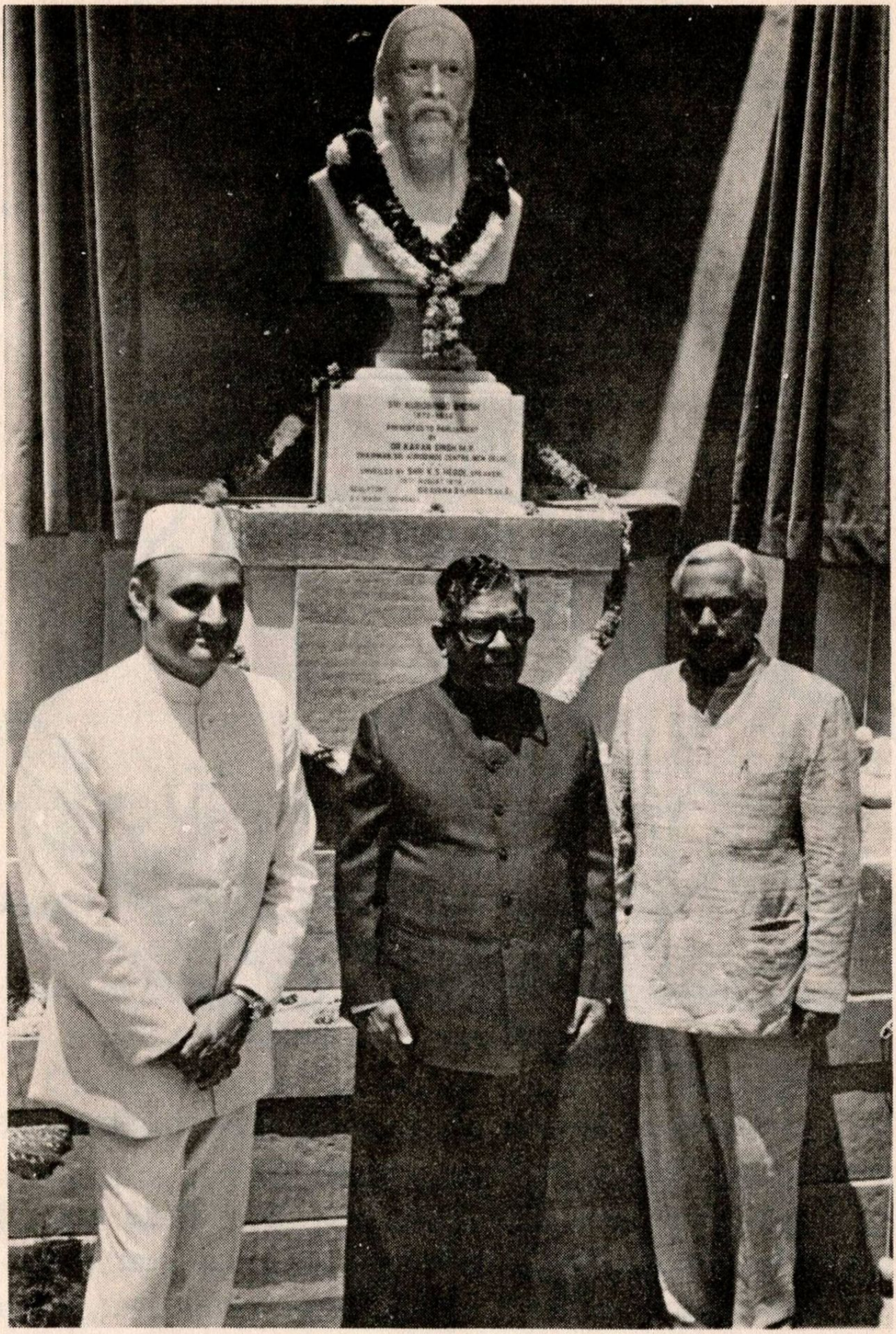
Meanwhile with utter surprise and wonder, the Sannyasi and the people gathered there saw the food being eaten by the idol of the Lord. Everyone with folded hands prostrated before the Shrine. The Sannyasi went near the Brahmin farmer and with a rush of emotion clasped him in his arms. "You are my guru, Gunderao. Forgive me. You are a Mahatma. I did not know it in my foolish pride of knowledge. Forgive me, Gunderao. Forgive this fool of a Sannyasi...."

Gunderao lifted his tearful eyes. He was unable to see or hear anything. Everyone went to him and bowed at his feet. But the utter agony of his soul had blotted out his senses. He could not make out anything. He burst into loud weeping. "I have betrayed my Lord. Woe to me! I loved my honour more." But then at once he found in himself a new man. "I cannot live without Him... I must find him... I must find him..." —

thus muttering to himself he ran away from the place like a mad man. Where he went nobody knew.

I have been told, the people of the village erected a temple of Mahatma Gunderao; and each year a special Aradhana is offered at the Shrine with great pomp and fanfare.

VENKATARANGA



A marble bust of Sri Aurobindo, presented by Dr. Karan Singh (*left*), was unveiled by Shri K. S. Hegde, Speaker, Lok Sabha (*in centre*), on August 15, 1978, at the entrance of the Central Hall of Parliament. The sculptor, Shri B. V. Wagh is seen on right.

Information Letter

AT the entrance of the historic Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, a marble bust of Sri Aurobindo was unveiled by Shri K. S. Hegde, Speaker, Lok Sabha, on August 15, 1978, in a function attended by parliamentarians and distinguished guests. Dr. Karan Singh enumerated the various contributions of Sri Aurobindo and presented the bust in the following words: "I would like to formally present to you and through you to Parliament, on this birthday of our nation and of Sri Aurobindo, the marble bust of this great Yogi, in the hope that his flaming nationalism and his deep cultural and spiritual commitment will guide us and help us to clarify our own minds and thoughts...." Shri Hegde while paying high tributes to Sri Aurobindo, said: "Sri Aurobindo drew men to the Almighty, and he showed the way for man and society alike to move towards the Life Divine upon the earth." The bust has been made by sculptor Shri B. V. Wagh, of Bombay.